Confidentiality of Library Records

The confidentiality of Library records is a basic principle of librarianship. Our Library patrons entrust us with important information. The nature of this relationship requires strict confidentiality. In safeguarding the information received, the Library earns the respect and further trust of our Library patrons.

Our privacy policy is available for the public to view at https://www.lfpl.org/policies#196

Here are some examples of what we keep confidential:

- titles of items checked out, overdue and holds list (reserves/held requests)
- personal information such as addresses, phone numbers or birthdate
- if he or she was seen at the library; or what a patron was doing at the library

Our operating procedures have an impact on how confidentiality is maintained. In order to achieve the highest confidentiality of library accounts and records possible, the Louisville Free Public Library will observe the following procedures:

- Except as identified in our policy, library staff will not provide a library user's personally identifiable information or reveal how he or she uses the library's resources to anyone other than the patron, who may be asked to verify his or her identity. This includes personal accounts and information of staff members.
- Library staff should limit the degree to which personally identifiable information is monitored, collected, disclosed and distributed.
- While Library volunteers should never have direct access to patron information in our ILS, it is important that Library volunteers also understand and follow these guidelines; staff working with volunteers are responsible for their training on this information.
- Documents:
    - Avoid unnecessary documentation. Document only when necessary for the efficient operation of the library.
    - For programs requiring registration/sign-up, staff should write down the information and store in a secure place.
    - Volunteer applications should be sent to the Business Office to be retained based on current retention policies. Volunteer sign-in sheets should be kept in a secure place.
    - For newspaper sign-out sheets, key sign-out sheets, etc., store in a place outside of the view of the public.
- Patron use of the library:
    - While the library is a public place and we cannot be responsible for someone being seen or recognized in a library, we should strive to keep a patron's visit private. Staff should not reveal to others that a particular patron was visiting the library or what library activities they were engaged in. Even though patron presence and behavior is observable by staff, our patrons should be able to work

independently without interruption. In this way, safety and privacy are maintained.
    - If staff are assisting a patron with materials, they should refrain from commenting on the titles or subject matter.
- Library staff should close out a patron's library record when using our ILS as soon as the transaction is complete.
- Do not maintain reading lists for patrons separate from what they have enabled in the ILS .
- Staff are not permitted to remove or make copies of any Louisville Free Public Library records, reports, documents, etc. without prior supervisory approval. Disclosure of confidential information could lead to termination, as well as other possible legal action.

If staff is presented with a subpoena, court order or search warrant, staff will follow these steps:

1. For any requests for information regarding a library user, staff will explain the library's confidentiality of library records policy. Library staff should not answer any questions regarding a patron's use of the library while working in the library or outside the library. If you are concerned about the appropriateness of a request or question, refer the request to your supervisor.
2. If a library staff member is presented with a subpoena or court order, he/she is to refer the presenter to the Library Director or his/her designee. The Director will contact the County Attorney to verify the validity of the order and advise the library of action. If the request comes in after the Administrative Office is closed, please call your supervisor or someone on your emergency contact list so the request can be processed as soon as possible.
3. If the library staff member is presented with a search warrant from a law enforcement officer, he/she is not to interfere with their search and seizure. The staff member is to contact the Library Director or designee as soon as possible to consult with legal counsel and to ask that the library's counsel be present during the search. Whether or not the law enforcement officer agrees to wait for the arrival of counsel, the County Attorney will be contacted. A search warrant must be specific as to the information requested. Information outside the scope of a search warrant cannot be released.